

HALLMARKS





The Hallmark staff is
honored to dedicate
This year's edition to
Mrs. Rosemary Paschall
"Flossie"
For all of her hard work.

Hallmarks



Emily Bond

Night Sounds

Squeaks translate into weathered boatdocks that tolerate the constant undulation of the ocean. Underneath the sound-blanket rest forgotten buoy chains that lazily surrender to the water currents.

- *Stephanie Smartt (12)*

It seemed the perfect vacation. The snow slowly fell around the cozy lodge. It was peaceful and pretty. Suddenly, it all changed. Electricity was lost. Roads were closed. The snow drifted higher until they were completely isolated from the nearby town. Then the terror began. People were being murdered. Now it seemed that she was alone with the maniac, that murderer.

A light flickered down the cold, dark corridor. Anna stayed still, watchful and waiting, back against the frigid wall. Her heart began pounding loudly, and she feared the figure down the hall could hear. The light grew steadily closer with, slow, quiet movements like an attacking cat. Her mind raced wildly, searching for the way out, a way to survive. She prayed constantly, subliminally. Suddenly the light hesitated; it threw shadows against the wall. It sensed her. Anna could barely breathe, she felt her death. She could discern the slight figure of a man. Was it him, the man she had been fearing? Her throat dry, her muscles tense, she was ready to take action. Should she run? Was there a way to fight? Questions, confusion, disorder, time was running out. Nothing seemed right. Should she accept death?

The light flickered, a cordial voice was heard, "Hello?". It was a small, timid voice, but effective. Anna breathed reassurance, her mind was thankful. She got up breathing, "Oh my God, you frightened me". The two began to converse rapidly about their fearful situation. The man's name was Drew. He was looking for some food or medicine. His friend was very sick and back in their room. They needed food badly. They journeyed toward the kitchen down the long, gloomy hallway. No sound was heard except their slight movements. The hall echoed their silence. When they reached the kitchen, Drew pushed open the heavy metal door. It creaked. The kitchen was a mess. It had already been searched frantically. They searched through cabinets and refrigerators. Nothing. The kitchen was bare. Tears filled Anna's eyes. It felt hopeless. Drew motioned her to stay quiet. She backed into a corner. He held a knife firmly yet nervously. A rat scurried across the floor and they were relieved. They left the

kitchen and journeyed back down the corridor to Drew's room. Drew's friend, Chris, emerged from the shadows, sweat glistening on his face. He hugged his friend and turned toward Anna. "I found her down the hallway," exclaimed Drew, "I believe she is the only other survivor." They all sat down and talked. "What's to be done about food, rescue, survival?" No answers were found. The room grew quiet. The light flickered as a cold breeze swept around the room. Their lives began to flash about them. Their memories were alive.

Drew spoke, "I remember my first day of school and how scary I thought it was. I didn't want to leave my mother and be with strange people. I wouldn't come in from recess, and the teacher would chase me around the playground. Finally, she called my mother who had to come and persuade me to go back inside. I'll never forget how comforting and understanding my mother was." His eyes were shifting and his mouth trembled. He looked at the floor and sighed.

Anna's voice then broke the silent, crisp air. Her voice was frail and hushed. "I've always had a stuffed animal, a dog, that's comforted me. His name was David. When I was very young, I wanted to run away. Accidentally, I left David behind. That's why I returned home. He kept me from getting in trouble, and he never ever hurt me. I loved him, and when he was with me, I was never scared."

The candle blew out but was soon re-lit. The three were wrapped in blankets, and their faces glowed from the light. Large shadows were cast against the background, and the silence was deafening.

Chris' voice trembled, his brow was wet with perspiration. "I have a sacred spot that I go to get away from my problems. A cliff overlooks a tranquil lake. The trees shelter you from harsh weather, and there are no man-made obstructions. It seems as if you're on top of the world, and nothing can bother you. I feel closer to God when I'm there. I'm a part or parcel of God."

A helicopter was heard. Their rescue was near. Their hearts leaped, and their fear seemed to disappear. Hope hesitated as their attention was focused on the turning doorknob.

Hallmarks



Anna Ruth Brown

The Theater

My apprehensive spirit
Travels this dim road
Each day.
I find myself surrounded by immense,
Looming trees
-A consuming fog
Slowly circling their highest branches.
I travel this path
With slow weary steps
And breathe in the electric life
Of the vigorous world around me.

The bare and sinister trees
Have stolen my words
And left me with their emptiness.
Like the savage parasite that only grows more hungry
As it feeds upon its prey
Their twisted black claws
Now reach out for my unshielded spirit...
I no longer trust their swaying restlessness
And I am reminded of my almost invisible existence
In this boundless theater of chance
Behind the dark curtain of winter.

-Jennifer L. Spinella (12)

A darkened room, a candle flame, the sounds of rain falling outside and of thunder crackling in the distance. Lightning briefly illuminates the night sky outside the water streaked windowpanes, turning everything as bright as day; then it is gone, and my small world is once more submerged in darkness save for the flickering candle before me. I sit, and stare into the tiny piece of firelight, and dream.

This is my image of solitude. It's a peaceful image; while the storm rages on outside the four walls of my room, silence and stillness reign in here with me. My candle provides a focus, something to concentrate on while my mind wanders where it will, among imaginary strangers, people whom I have seen or met briefly. I know nothing about these people's true lives, but it amuses me to create lives for them, to give these people personalities when I don't know who they are, problems when I have no idea what their real conflicts may be. I feel like God, and I wonder if God ever feels so lonely, or so concerned for His characters.

I am safe in this little room; no one can bother me, because no one knows where I have gone or when I will come back. Sometimes I wish that I did not have to come back at all; my private world of the candle flame is much more pleasant than the world where the thunderstorms shakes everything it touches. But, inevitably, dreaming comes to an end, and I come back to my small refuge to listen to the rain and lightning outside subjugating and revitalizing the whole world. I look away from the candle before me and think about how safe it feels to be locked away from the world outside these walls. Protected, isolated, and a little sad — although I know that to open this private place of mine to another person would be to destroy its value entirely, I begin to miss the company of other people, other flames, as sheltered from the storm as I am, yet not confined to their own separate demesnes. The others cluster together for companionship; to join them would be to desert the people of my world, but it is not an easy decision to make when flesh-and-blood humans offer solid, almost tangible friendship. Even God deserted His people once, sending a great flood to wipe them out; should I relegate my imagination to the back of my mind? I do not think I could, even if I made an attempt, and I do not think that I will try to abandon my characters. They are precious to me, as is this safe haven in the midst of the chaos which is the world; they live inside my mind, my candle flame. My aloneness breeds the voices of my people inside me, and so it, too must be essential for my peace of mind. I may leave my darkened room, may put my stories on hold, but my characters know that I will always return, because I must. Solitude is my haven and my strength and the source of my dreams -- it surrounds the me that is *me* and not the mishmash of tissue and bone that is my body. It is a part of me.

Construction

Stop! Don't hit that piece yet. If you do, you'll slice away the place for a foot. Here. Watch. Cut away a small piece, like this. See how it works? You can always take more away, but you can never give back.

Take this wedge and hammer. Envision your final form as a whole. Make her like Helen of Troy. Now start chipping away. Slowly. Round out the kneecaps; swell out around the sides of her thighs. Fill her stomach and her chest. Leave room to emphasize the delicate clavicle and neck.

Give her a face like the one that launched a thousand ships. Pull out a protruding chin; pinch a long, Greek nose. Sweep in two thoughtful, distant eyes. Ringlet her hair.

As you create, you are taking Helen away from Paris. You cause a loss for him. as you gain — Just like when Helen left with Menelaus.

Now go back to the feet. Uncover toes. Toenails. Refine the legs. Give muscle to her thighs. Sand the soft stomach. Dig in the contrast and shadows. Polish her nose; her forehead.

Take three steps back. Look at your Helen. realize what you have been able to do. In essence, you have created by taking away. You have become Menelaus.

-Stephanie Smartt (12)



Sarah Walton

Hallmarks



Heather Hodde

When I was in High School I used to have this really weird dream. I would dream that Susan Starman, The Homecoming Queen, had hired me to paint her on the beach in Mexico. I would be busy at work, but it would be so hot that the oils would get this strange consistency, and the colors would get this heavy film on top. We would decide to take a break and she would walk over to her vanity table and "touch up". She would try to put some powder on her face, but she was so sweaty it wouldn't do any good. Then, all of the sudden her body began to melt. I mean not like in some sci-fi movie, but those plastic implants, that seemed to double as a magnet for young boys, began to drip off her chest, like warm silly putty. My mouth hit the sand as I began to walk towards her. She started to run; I threw down my brush and followed. She was slim and her body could move so much faster. Finally, I saw I couldn't catch up and fell in the sand; that's when I would wake up.

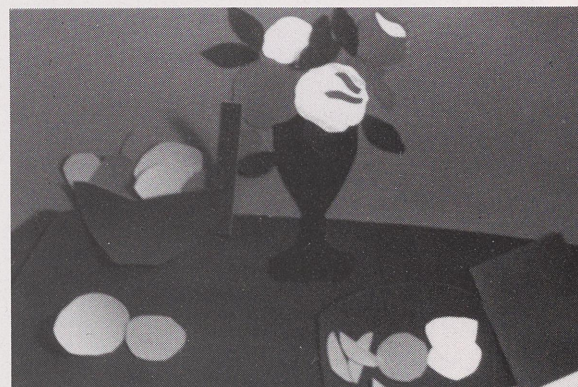
I haven't thought of that dream in years. The whole thing just came to me when she said "In my spare time I like to paint." I can't believe I went to high school with Ms. America. I know I should get back to work, but must hear what BS she feeds Dick Clark. Right now this is much more important than this boring project; I mean what an assignment: a table setting. I turn off the TV, and now I seem to be inspired by the silverware aspect. I start to draw the knife, a large silver butcher knife.

-Sacha Engel (12)

WHY?

She looks down
And she sees all the fun.
All the fun that she missed
Because she made
That mistake.
She looks down
And she searches,
Searches for the answer
To her once
Unsolved conflict.
She looks down
And the bright world below
Winks at her,
Tempts her.
But she is powerless.
Powerless to solve her conflict.
Powerless to get her wish
Her wish
To go back in time,
To come back.
They look down.
They look down
On the
Freshly dug grave
And their tears
Course down freely.
They look down
And they see
The bright flowers,
And they feel
The aching bruise in their hearts;
And all they have
Are memories.
Then slowly,
Ever so painfully
They look up,
And the question,
The burning question
That haunts them
Forever they will ask.
WHY?

-Yonit Adelstein (10)



Ellie Binkley

Hallmarks



Lindsey Orcutt

The Country Club

The rain cannot fall on their heads
Still they are flashers in disguise
Sandpaper skinned building block stairs
Cushioned in red velvet covers

A tip to the umbrella boy
Of some fifty years or better
Black calloused crust infested thumb
Cross fresh ivory liquid fingers

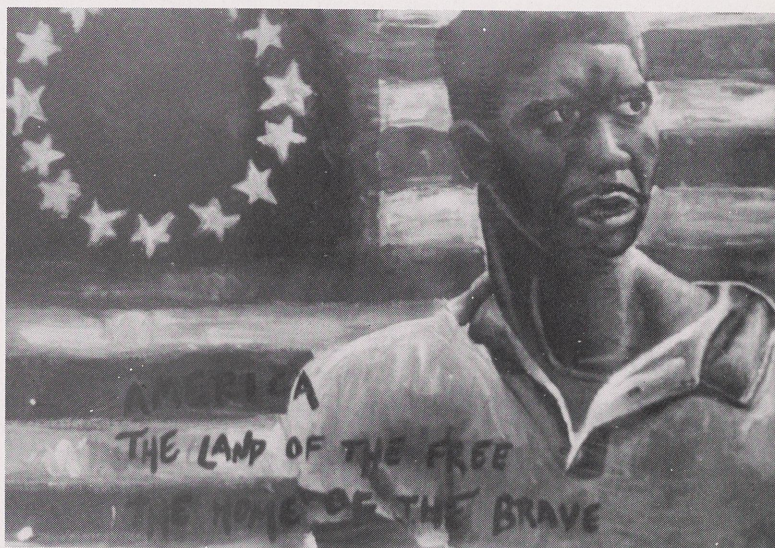
The Misses cringes at the touch
A manicured punch in the gut
A cat clinging to a black board
Sliding silently but in his ear

Stomach concave her lids slow closed
Her head tilts down her jaw pulls back
He drops his hand and leaves the green
There is one smile and one hung head

-Heather Hodde (12)

HE IS MY GUARDIAN,
MY PROTECTOR,
OR IS HE?
HE GIVES LIFE,
HE TAKES LIFE.
DOES HE REALLY?
FOR SIXTEEN YEARS
I HAVE BEEN TOLD HE DOES,
FOR SIXTEEN YEARS
I HAVE BEEN HAVING DOUBTS.
AM I BAD
AM I WICKED
FOR HAVING SUCH THOUGHTS?
I ASK QUESTIONS
I GET ANSWERS.
ARE THEY TRUE?
ALL MY LIFE I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING
BUT HAVE COME UP
WITH NOTHING NEW.
ARE YOU THERE GOD?
IT'S ME.
IF YOU'RE THERE,
IF YOU CARE,
IF YOU TRULY EXIST,
PLEASE TAKE THE TIME
TO LOOK DOWN AND FIND ME;
TO ANSWER THE QUESTION
THAT BOTHERS ME SO.
I LOOK UP TO THE SKY,
RAISE MY EYES
AND ASK,
WHY?

-Yonit Adelstein (10)



Tiffany DeFrance (11)

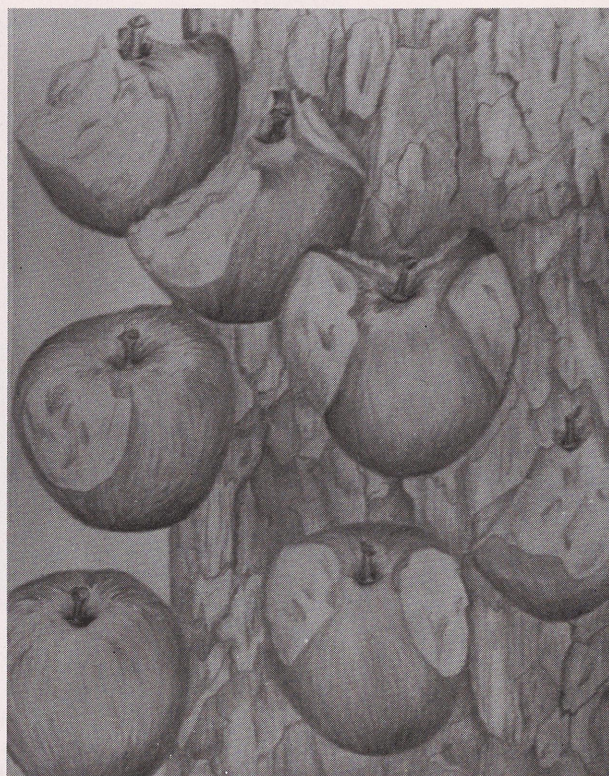
Hallmarks

Basic White Bread

Ingredients:

3 pkg dry yeast
1 t salt
1/3 cup shortening
1 egg, beaten
3 T sugar
1/3 cup fat
1-1/2 cups scalded milk
5 cups flour

Soften yeast in 1/2 cup warm water. Add sugar, salt, shortening, and milk, cooled to lukewarm. Add egg, yeast, and flour. Let rise in greased bowl to twice its bulk. Knead again. Let rise in 2 greased loaf pans. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. reduce heat to 375 and bake 30 minutes longer. Turn out onto racks and brush with butter.



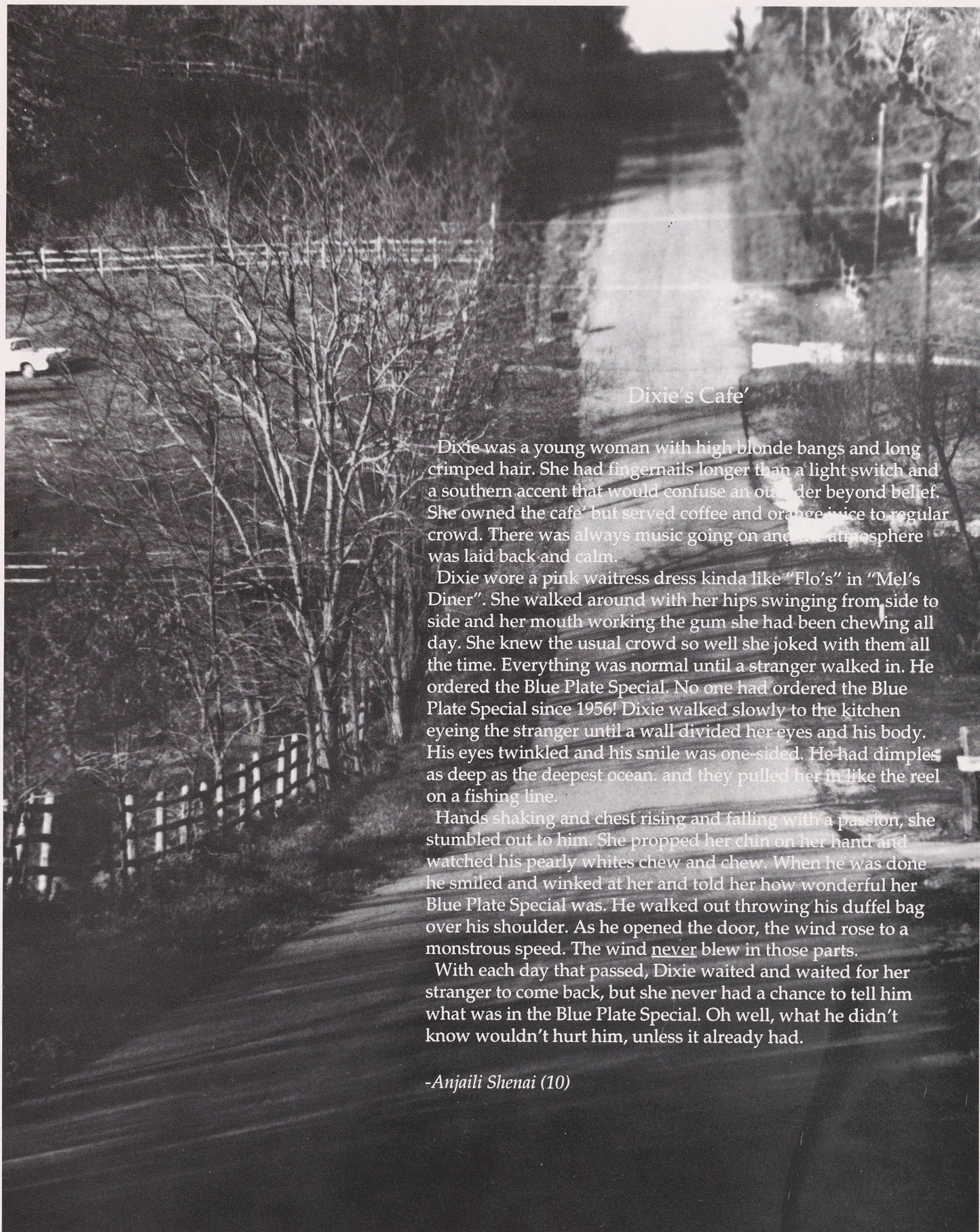
Sarah Philips

I watch my mother bake bread all the time, but most especially after the weather turns cold and Thanksgiving is coming up. I love to come home from school and smell the scents of yeast and flour and milk permeating the house, but until recently I didn't really think about how you make bread. I knew that you put milk and flour and some other stuff into a bowl and pounded it into subservience, and that the yeast did something funny to the sticky white mass when Mama put it, covered in a dishcloth, on a dryer to rise, but it never occurred to me to wonder what happened with the yeast and the raw bread dough under the towel.

So I asked, and Mama got very excited and began to explain it to me as, I suppose her mother explained it to her. I never knew that in that little yellow package of "active dry yeast" there are one hundred and thirty billion living cells. I had no idea that when you stirred that cornmeal-looking stuff into water and then poured it into the bread all those little monsters began to chow down on the carbo in the dough, leaving little bubbles of carbon dioxide in their wake — that's why bread rises to "twice its bulk" when you put the yeast in and put the bowl in a warm place. Its like sending a hundred thirty billion starving rabbits into the world's biggest carrot farm — they stuff themselves insensible, and then they begin to multiply like crazy. The end result of this bacterial orgy is a heaping bowl of bread dough which is chock full of air bubbles and baby yeasts. To make the dough manageable, you have to knead it into submission, then cram it into loaf pans and give those baby yeasts a chance to grow up, byproduce some more carbon dioxide, and make some more babies.

This explanation made me think twice about ever eating bread again until I found out that the baking kills off all the yeasts which have gone in and made my toast worth consuming in the morning. I like the way in which the yeast changed the bread I eat, but I'm not particularly interested in swallowing a couple hundred thousand living organisms every time I take a bite of bread. Dead yeasts or not, maybe I'll switch to matzoh in the mornings...

-Mab Byrd (11)



Dixie's Cafe'

Dixie was a young woman with high blonde bangs and long crimped hair. She had fingernails longer than a light switch and a southern accent that would confuse an outsider beyond belief. She owned the cafe' but served coffee and orange juice to regular crowd. There was always music going on and the atmosphere was laid back and calm.

Dixie wore a pink waitress dress kinda like "Flo's" in "Mel's Diner". She walked around with her hips swinging from side to side and her mouth working the gum she had been chewing all day. She knew the usual crowd so well she joked with them all the time. Everything was normal until a stranger walked in. He ordered the Blue Plate Special. No one had ordered the Blue Plate Special since 1956! Dixie walked slowly to the kitchen eyeing the stranger until a wall divided her eyes and his body. His eyes twinkled and his smile was one-sided. He had dimples as deep as the deepest ocean, and they pulled her in like the reel on a fishing line.

Hands shaking and chest rising and falling with a passion, she stumbled out to him. She propped her chin on her hand and watched his pearly whites chew and chew. When he was done he smiled and winked at her and told her how wonderful her Blue Plate Special was. He walked out throwing his duffel bag over his shoulder. As he opened the door, the wind rose to a monstrous speed. The wind never blew in those parts.

With each day that passed, Dixie waited and waited for her stranger to come back, but she never had a chance to tell him what was in the Blue Plate Special. Oh well, what he didn't know wouldn't hurt him, unless it already had.

-Anjaili Shenai (10)

Treasure Chest

Cramped, but erect, my eighty-two year old aunt, Camilla, sat on the car's back seat, leaving most of the room for the pine chest which she was returning to my grandfather, "Pampaw." Camilla had refinished the chest with a fresh fruitwood stain and semi-gloss coating, giving a fine, even shine to the chest which Pampaw had made as a youth in the Amish country of Pennsylvania. Rubbing his hands across the smooth grain, Pampaw chuckled, "Well, looky here, and I'd forgotten all about this little chest." He reminisced as he explained to me just how he had made it and offered to help me make one that would look nice at the foot of my own bed. I quickly accepted, purchased some mahogany wood, and we began working.

During the days spent crafting the chest in Pampaw's workshop I observed qualities in my grandfather that are unfortunately becoming endangered and rare in today's world. Even in the beginning when we only had raw slabs of mahogany, I was eager to have the finished product, but as work commenced and progressed. I realized Pampaw would not compromise by accepting any short cuts. We alternated planing the wood, with sweat beading on our brows until the adjacent pieces of wood were perfectly identical. During tedious stages in the work I would plead, "Pampaw, this is good enough, isn't it?" However, after seeing the finished product, I understood why his reply was always, "No, you can get a little better, Trishy."

From Pampaw's steadfast craftsmanship and from his patient hands I realized that there is much more pleasure and reward to be found in taking the time to do something well. This realization made me aware of how much the world around me has become one of instant gratification. The fast foods from McDonald's, the allure of crash diets, the brevity of Cliff Notes, and even the fleeting pleasure of careless, impersonal sexual relationships — the "short cuts" of our society are not adequate. When today's "short cuts" become routine, rewards are forfeited; the grooves do not fit well; the wood doesn't shine; the smiles don't last as long after short cuts have been taken.

Pampaw could have offered to purchase a chest similar to the one he had made years ago, but he had the confidence that we could construct a chest unrivaled by any on the market. Furthermore, he had the vision to foresee that we would have a memorable experience. Right he was! The discipline of the work was challenging; the process of creating was stimulating; the involvement felt healthy and fulfilling. If more people would actively create rather than passively absorb, the world would benefit from the natural therapy of creativity. Nintendo must be set aside if a fort in the woods is to be built. Television must be turned off if the mind and the hands are to be allowed to find their own satisfaction and to reach toward their own potential.

The mahogany chest is now nestled at the foot of my bed, and it has a value to me beyond its materialistic worth or its functional purpose. The chest has an intangible value to me because it will always remind me of the handwork my grandfather and I put into its making, and most significantly, on my time with Pampaw. I realized that the time with my grandparents, parents, siblings, and close friends is priceless and irreplaceable. I hope that more people can find the treasure of truly knowing and spending time with their own family members and close friends because in such a fast paced environment it is easy to let even a lifetime pass by. As I built the chest with Pampaw, I discovered that the wood not only evolved into a chest, but into a treasure chest, and some of my own values clarified and became as solid as the mahogany wood.

-Tricia Bryan (12)



Mary Britton Thompson

I Love

You smile;
I laugh,
My heart feels
What the eye cannot see.

You sit;
I stare,
I can't keep
My eyes off you.

You talk;
I listen,
I'd hear anything
You'd offer my ears.

You sing;
I melt,
My heart dies inside
My desire grows stronger.

I see you;
But you don't see me the same,
For my heart feels a love
That yours does not return.

-Liz Ligon (9)

The weather is so definite-
sunny, bright, and jovial;
Springtime's perfection.
But my mixed emotions clash with the
atmosphere
I am so unsure
see-sawing back and forth
like indecisive summer rain
Declaring showers at unlocked times
surprising everything.
Then quickly sneaking away.
Leaving no trace of a dreary, wet
impression.

-Mary Wallace Patrick (12)



Mary Britton Thompson



Heather Hodde

True

Sometimes when I look in the mirror I think I look like my mother - I can see her shining through the assured glances I give myself when I am alone; about to get into bed at night. I stand in front of the mirror in my gold, wire-rimmed glasses with grease gloss on my lips, and I smile and make different poses. I pretend I am a model. Then I see my mother in the mirror and I snap quickly to reality.

It all started when I met him. He was the epitome of dark and mysterious: a hitch-hiking stranger bringing new excitement to our town. He was more than nice - a warm and friendly, open personality granted him many friends right from the start. But then he met me.

I think it was a Sunday or something, I was out with the usual gang, and he pulled up with the others in a jeep. His soft black hair bobbed when he moved and his dark eyes constantly danced over whatever excitement anyone was stirring up. We exchanged handshakes and breathless hellos. I was excited. He was passionate. The night ended technically with the typical cool conversation and my share of white lies. But for me it ended when he kissed the top of my hand gently and romantically, and flashed a bright smile accompanying his fiery, dancing eyes.

The next day brought more white lies — my subtle attempt at creating a lifestyle desirable in the eyes of others. And so it was, I told him that I was a model. And I was, to a certain extent, at night, in front of my mirror. Hell, I could be anything I wanted to be, right? But that night the dream ended with one smile too many in that mirror: the smile revealed my mother's ever-knowing glance, and the true realization of the man I truly loved.

-Mary Vance (12)

A rose, baptized by the morning dew,
innocently fresh and new,
blowing in the breezy air,
bows its head in solemn prayer.

A child, sitting underneath the rose,
big blue eyes and freckled nose,
sees soft colors, smells sweet smells,
hears sweet tales the flower tells.

A drop, image of a falling tear,
free from any pain or fear,
dewfall from the praying rose,
landing on a tiny nose.

A tear, trickling down a childlike face,
full of happiness and grace,
yet knowing sadness no child knows,
crying for the wilting rose.

-Sarah Chisolm (9)



Heather Hodde

The tired mind relieves itself,
as you slowly watch
the sun descend behind the hills
like a jewel taken by thieves.

-Katie Sloan (10)

Hallmarks



Alexis Reed

I stood in the middle of the barren brown field
The air reeked of death
The sky held a deep coal grey color, while a hint of gunsmoke
still lingered
In the distance I heard shots that seemed to echo for miles,
followed by painful cries of the weary soldiers
All around me were the limp frames of men and women on the ground
decaying for their country

This morning in church, we prayed for victory
For victory in an ugly battle
For succeeding in what we were there to do
That their children would be slain instead of ours
We prayed for pain and grief - that they would suffer through it
and not us
This battle had blinded us
We were praying for death instead of life
And in the end that's what we got-
Our hope was gone, our children were gone, the victory was lost.

Untitled

As I walk through grass, weeds, and clover
the sights above, below, and around
transfigure from living to dead.
Green, full leaves once vibrant on trees
now crackle yellow and orange beneath my toes.
Beautiful spring flowers
now droop shriveled and brown,
lush grass
now houses fungus and weeds.
The bare trees reveal limbs,
scrawny, twisting, and cracking.
Green, yellow, pink, and red of spring
now go to dying beauty
of bare greys and browns.

-Jennifer LaRue (10)



Alexis Reed

Hallmarks



Stephanie Cook

Nature's Wars

The sun and moon
Both sleep tonight
And the sea swells
And grows black with fury...
I stand high upon a cliff
Amid the sky's electric darkness
But I know the sea will swallow me tonight...

Its darkest waters
Shatter into white
On the rocks far beneath my feet,
But I feel the nearness
Of its chilling spirit
Which reaches closer with a rare intensity.

Engulfed by the uncanny
Warmth of the winds,
I am left chilled with burning life
High above the spirit
Of nature's torment and strife...

-Jennifer L. Spinella (12)

Refuge

I run as if to escape
The deadly breath of winds
Each of my steps more uncontrolled
And fleeting than the last,
I wonder when the erratic ground
Will drop from beneath my feet.

Freedom seems as tangible as light
Running at this shattering pace
But I savor the unfaded memory
Of disturbed, lingering steps...

The winds hypnotized my unsuspecting spirit
And drives me deep into the center
Of this reckless forest
Where the fragile earth crumbles under my feet
And am I lost in the vast world of solitude
My own strife created.

-Jennifer L. Spinella (12)



Heather Hodde



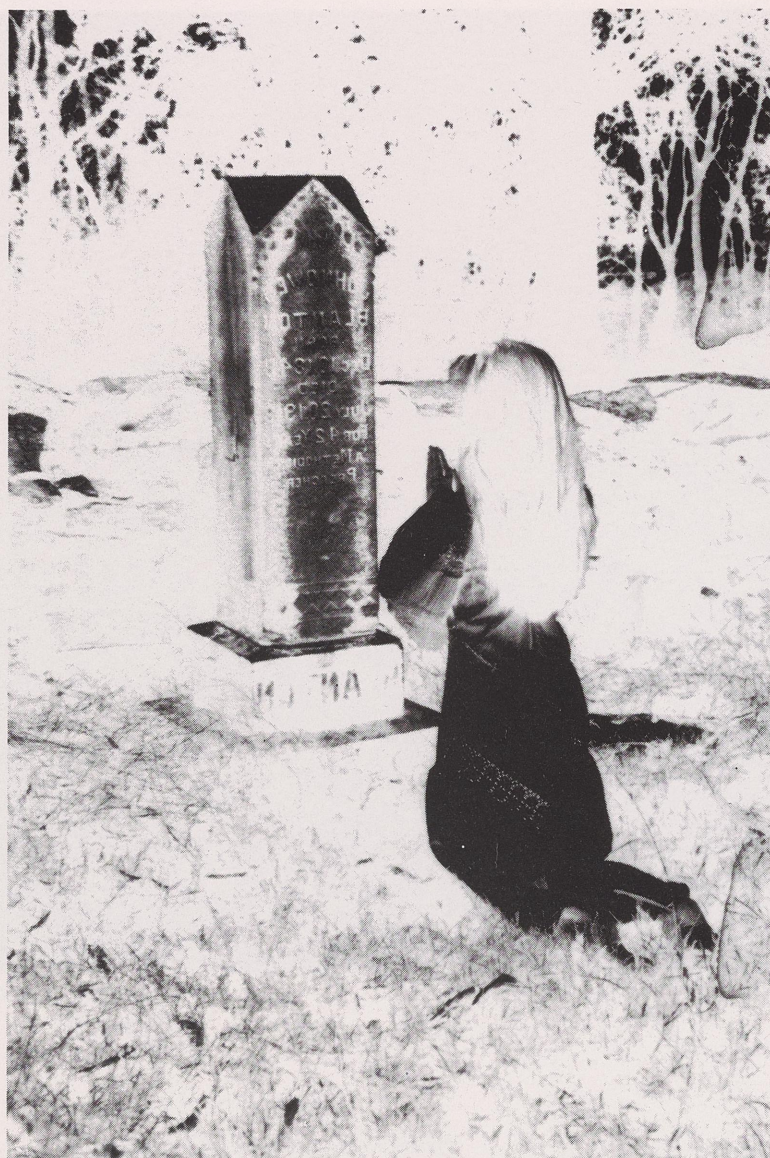
Deanna Adcock

Untitled

Simply abandoned. This is not a place or thing abandoned. This is a person, a real person, transformed into a stone. With no money or identity, the person underneath becomes a number, a double digit in some book hidden in the dark corner of some dusty old library. I do not understand how someone could be forgotten so easily. I scrape the hard formed dirt off the chipped gray stone. It is a forgotten stone. How can you forget someone who was alive in this world? Someone who had a past? A present? But no future? Two small carnations of false array grace the edge to remind others of the stone's existence. The cold gray stone, the stone to mark a life and remember a death, it has been.

-Deanna Adcock (12)

Hallmarks



Caroline West

Jennifer

The casket was directly in front of me, just resting there, opened. The white, silk, cushiony lining enveloped her as she lay there, still and quiet. She looked so beautiful in her favorite dress, the blue one with the white bows down the front. I still couldn't believe this had happened. "Why?" I kept repeating, "Why Jennifer?" I approached the casket and just looked at her, thinking: if only I stood there long enough, she would open her eyes and tell me it was all a nightmare. I didn't want to touch her cold body but I wanted to remember her warm touch. Uncontrollable tears were rapidly rolling down my cheeks but I could not feel them anymore, I was numb everywhere on my body. I was unaware of my family in the room with me. The only thought I had was

my best friend peacefully resting in her coffin. I couldn't understand why God had taken her away from me.

My parents tried to comfort me, hiding, as best they could, their own hurt and abandonment. "She is in a better place" they assured me. I knew that but I couldn't understand why she was there now when I needed her here with me.

At the funeral, I sat paralyzed with disbelief that this tragedy had actually occurred. I couldn't cry, I didn't have any tears left. I gazed at her family, They also sat extremely still. How could this happen? They didn't deserve this! She was everything I wanted to be, I wanted her here forever. I never knew it would be this hard, losing someone so dear to my heart. I don't think I have truly accepted that Jennifer is not alive anymore, only in my dreams.

-Caroline West (12)

Glass and Silver

What do you want of me now,
With your sharp honeyed tongue
And your sticky groping fingers
And the flowers in your hair
Soft and brown and stinking
And your bridal robes that glare?

There are times
Often times
I am not who you need me to be.
You brush me aside
And smiling wave
And I can bow and thank you
I can bow and thank you in my own style.

Then like a sandy summer storm
You take my time-tapestries,
Colored cloth I've woven,
And a scrap, it shows especially nice
On custom metal or stone,
My name

And with it, fears, dreams
Hope
Love
And all that I shall become
You lick your lips
You claw
To take everything I am to be
And lay it all in glass and silver bowl
You hold it in your lap like a child.

I am not a list
Nor a number
I have a sense and a soul
And I can recognize justice -
You will pay for all you have done
You taught me to get what I want

I want then:
Vines to grow up in the flowers
Catch your ankles
And muddy your whiteness

Ruin you
And then I
I will have what I want
I will have won

Oh

What do you want of me?
For you I'll lose
All my sense and purpose and reason

-Anonymous



Alexis Reed

Hallmarks



Jennifer Larue

Brother of Mine

With the glossy unreality of a magazine page between us
I can't help but feel sorrow and pity
Pity for your plight,
For your suffering-But
Look at you,
It's hard for me to recognize that you're a human child.
You're eyes ooze a whitish glue
That insects swarm around, blinding you
By their wings;
You are too weak to bat them away,
Or blink them off.
They continue to cover the flaking brown skin
Barely stretching over your bones
And your cheeks that fall into a mouth
Of blackened, broken teeth and chewed up, gummy lips.
You brush a too big hand over your too big head
Like a monkey trying to think and
Your hair falls out in clumps and blows
Down onto the sticks you wear as shoulders.
It settles, along with the rest of the dirt
That has blown on top of your immobile figure,
Across the pregnant, distended bowl that contains
Nothing but a stomach rotting from disease and neglect.

I suppose that you've been lying there for weeks now
Among all those other bones that still breathe, if barely,
Because the tinker-toy legs you have are not strong enough
To bend, let alone lift or walk.
You lie there open mouthed even though you're long forgot
The taste of milk or perhaps the scent of a mother's tears.
You've become another son slaughtered by the drought,
Orphaned by the war, made real to a world that can't smell
Your stench by a photographer and his telephoto lens.
If I could touch you then maybe I'd love you
But you're as close to me as a magazine page,
And as far from me as a nightmare.
I won't let myself remember that even with oceans between us,
You're still related to me on Adam's side,
And that family should never let family go hungry.

Shooting Stars

Surrounded by cold darkness
my eyes magnetized to the stars.
They are the only light
I sense in existence.
Filled with hope, wonder
God throws one my way ... a shooting star.
How I wish I could catch a ride!
I reach with all my heart
run with all my strength,
desperate to be pulled up closer to the
thousands of lights stitching the sky.
But then it is gone,
fallen into nowhere,
beyond the invisible horizon.
Perhaps that one was not meant for me.
I'll have to wait for my ride,
if I can stand it a bit longer,
maintain my yearning persistence.
But what if that was my star?
Maybe I was too blind.
Maybe my eyes caught it,
but my head
carried me the wrong way.
For it is my heart which must lead
for the body is nothing.
The body is only an obstacle
which keeps me from my dreams.
It blinds my sight.
Now I must wait,
remain in the darkness
If I am ever to see any light.
My star WILL come my way,
but only if I keep my eyes open,
...then I can grab hold.

-Carrie LeBrec (11)



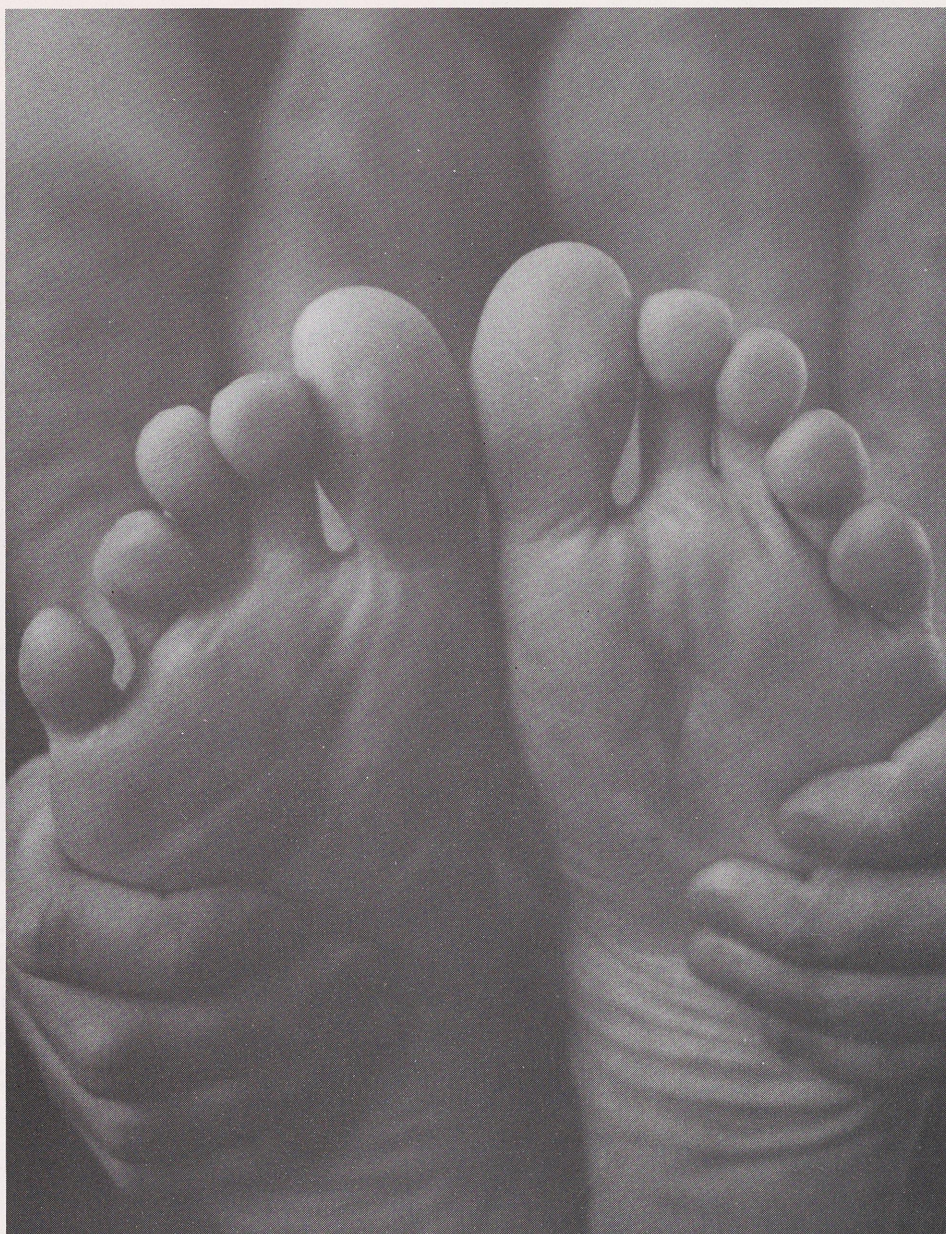
Helene Dettwiller

The Last Time

On the windshield
The rain splattered
Splashed away by the squeaky wipers
It beaded along the windows
And ran in little rivulets
Down the glass
Bumping into each other to form
Streams

Neither said too much
And when they spoke
It didn't have any meaning
Just something to fill the silence
Which said it all
She resigned herself
To feeling hollow
Because she knew
That it was the end
She was numb
And dying
Stepped out into the drizzle
He said goodbye
For a moment
Their hands touched
He drove away
Did he look back?
She watched him
As he went
And then she stood
Alone in the rain

-Catherine Blackburn (10)



Katie Moran

The Raindrop

Slowly, slowly, slowly...I glide through the air as though I have all the time in the world. As I feel the air whipping against my sides, my pace quickens. Noticing those around me in similar form, my flight becomes more communal.

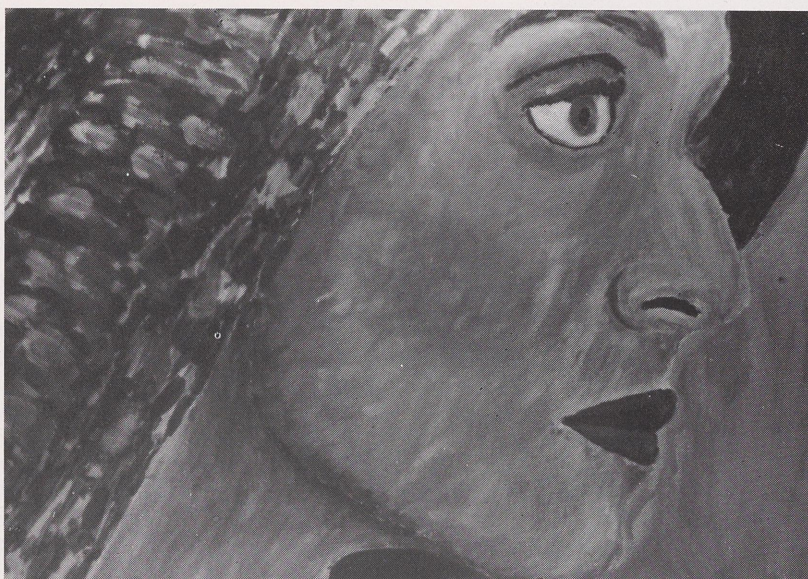
Swept into the current of motion surrounding me, I anticipate the mysterious earth below. Seeing a child with an outreached tongue attempting to quench his thirst, I no longer want to continue. Why can I not return to those clouds from which I originated. The safety and security have vanished, and now I go into a world unknown.

-Holly Whetsell (11)

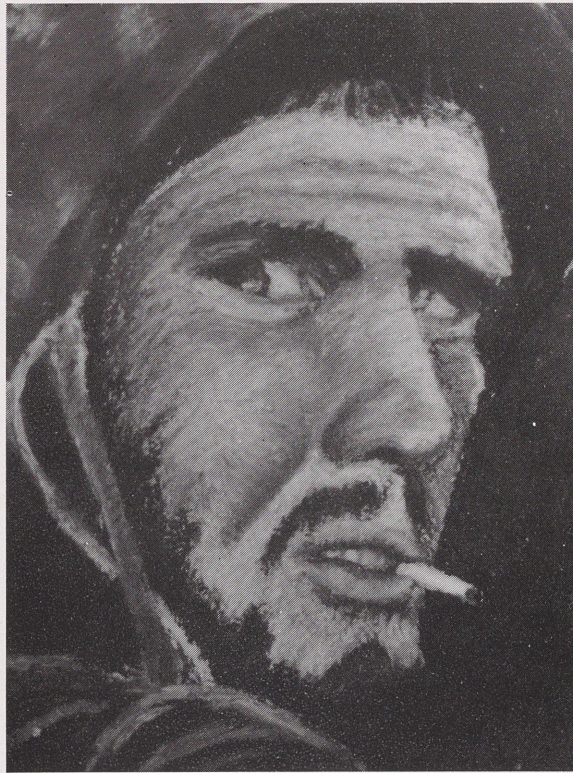
"The Goo"

She dug into her purse, pulled out her tools, and laid them on the counter. Her skin was the exact color of "flesh", the crayon in the box of 64. When I looked up at her face it reminded me of a book shelf, all sharp lines and mismatched colors. I could tell what she was thinking, strawberry field or bubble gum pink. Her forehead wrinkled as she placed all her weight on her left leg and rested on her cocked hip. She choose her weapon, it was the color of those melted cherry sucrets in my desk drawer. As she unscrewed the vial, the fuchsia goo stuck to the applicator. With the back of her hand she wiped her dry cracked lips as if she was preparing a new canvas. The wand glided easily over the rough surface. Her lips were big and with that violent color they seemed to jump off her face. I stopped washing my hands and stared. She turned and looked at me as an involuntary "Hey" came out of my mouth. She began to speak, but I couldn't hear her. I was focused on the action of her lips, and not the sounds she was making. As her lips parted, small lines of this sticky pink matter turned into rubber material. The lines never broke they just stretched up as she moved her mouth. As another girl entered the bathroom she shrieked a high pitched "Oh my gaw" that ruptured those glossy strings. She left the bathroom and I admired my own face. I knew what I needed. I pulled my blue pot out of my pocket, and smeared a colorless shine over lips that made them tingle. The only colors on my face were reddish zits and dark circle; it was translucent. You could see the imperfections. You could see the blood running through my face. You could see there was something behind my face.

-Sacha Engel (12)



Hallie Anderson



Stephanie Cook

The Glory Of The Front Lines

He is a pillar of strength
with cracks of immense pressure
growing in his sides.
His face
nearly always
has the blades of courage
sticking out.
He is a warrior
against life itself.
He is in a constant battle
against people,
time,
and sometimes even me.
I have to read the pages of his emotions
which are always displayed
in his eyes and facial expressions,
and I have to adjust my mood to his.

His emotions are closeted
hidden from the world,

a world which shows no
sympathy
for its wounded soldiers,
like this soldier of life.
He tends his own wounds,
like a tiger.
He looks to us for
reassurance.
Yet he reassures us in times of
need.
He has a strength that I can only
dream of.

He can never be
my white knight,
but he can love me, too.
He can protect me
from the tornados that
rip apart our lives.
And he does.

He loves me,
protects me,
advises me,
and prepares me
for the battles
I will have to fight.
So I am ready
because of this soldier of
life,
love,
and peace.
I hear a sound of
the first gunshots of war,
and I firmly
take my brother's place
in the front lines.

-Anjali Shenai (10)

Hallmarks

Breathing Pain

Everything is falling apart
There is nowhere left to turn
So many directions without a map
and each way you get burned
Try to shut my eyes to get away
From all the judgements out there
But I still hear it, smell it, and feel it
And no one really cares
Where do you go when all ends are dead?
Who do you tell when all ears are closed?
How can you ask the right questions
When all good answers in life have been disposed?
What is the point of living
If there is no point in life?
Just a few good memories mixed in
With pain, problems, and strife
Pain can't be avoided in this messed up world
With each breath I acquire more
We are all in one big house of chaos
And God is standing at the door...
maybe laughing
maybe crying while watching
As we destroy ourselves.

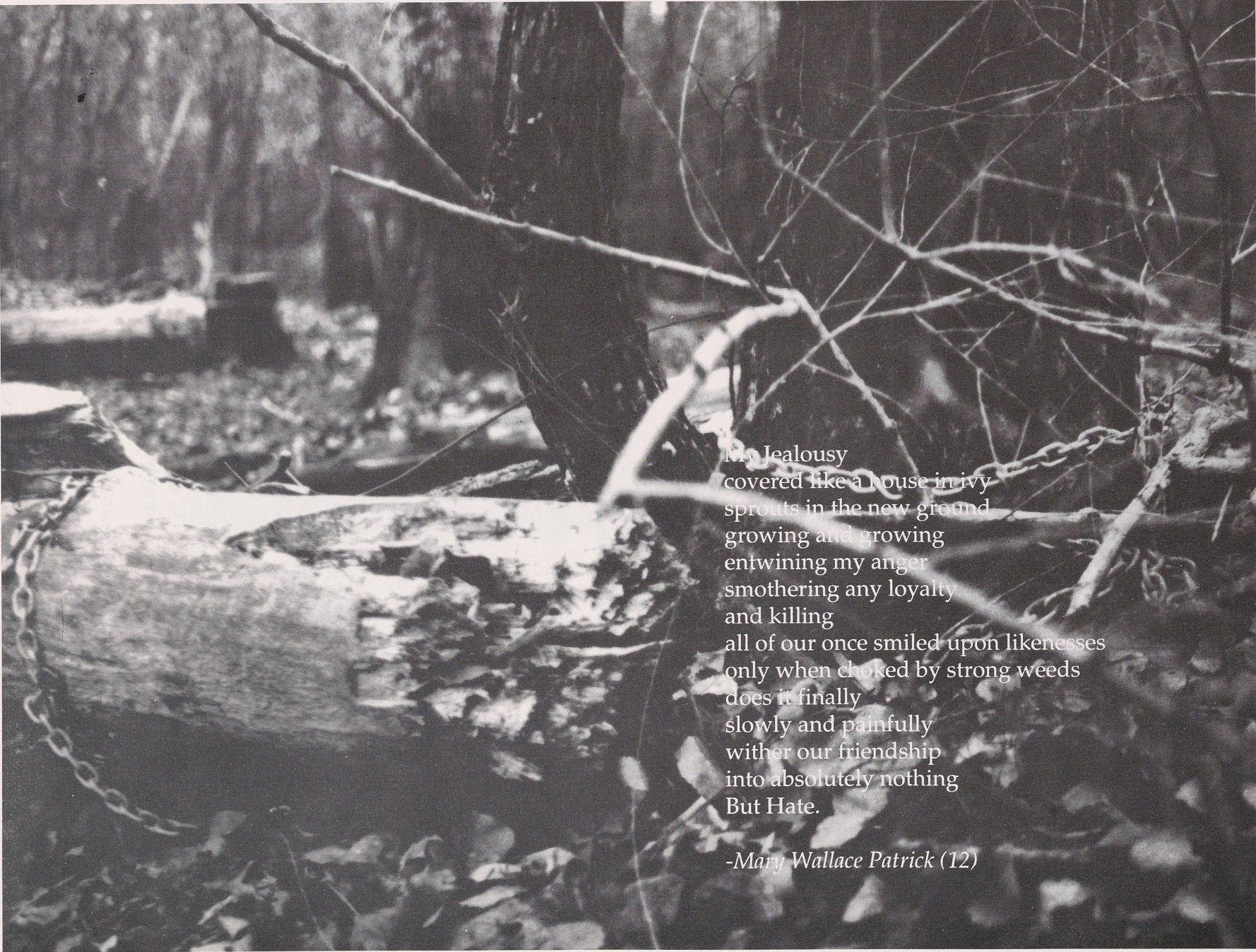
-Liz Ligon (9)



Heather Hodde



Bethany Ragsdale



My Jealousy
covered like a house in ivy
sprouts in the new ground
growing and growing
entwining my anger
smothering any loyalty
and killing
all of our once smiled upon likenesses
only when choked by strong weeds
does it finally
slowly and painfully
wither our friendship
into absolutely nothing
But Hate.

-Mary Wallace Patrick (12)

Hallmarks



Katie Moran

Deserved Destiny

In a grove of rotting blackness, a foolish sapling
to young to know the consequences of youthful
mistakes.
It ignored the diligent work necessary in digging
deep into the dirt.
The rain stopped.
Frail roots buckled from the cracked earth, unable
to reach liquid life.
Fate seized the lazy and cut the throat.

Cliffs of stone grey, lonely and bare, high above
the world.
In need of companionship, the temptation is great.
Blinded by vibrant green, they cannot see
through to the acidic intentions.
The jagged edges of submission, surmounted by
lichens.
Cracked and crumbled from its own weakness

Crystal blue water, swiftly flowing
Its erosive behavior, eats away the earth
Aggressively determined to drag her silt in
its current.
Centuries of extending deeper, cutting its mark.
Far below on the canyon floor, it is dubbed by
all as progressive and grand.

-Eva Rawlings (12)

Fore Looking

The present is a
mere soothsayer of
tomorrow even as we
behold the past.
It is inevitable as we know
it will always come, yet
so unworthy as we do not
know precisely what it brings.
Move towards the truth and
the closer it appears, the
more dangerous it becomes.
Truth, for some is purification;
For others it is destruction.
The future is now as we
foreshadowed it yesterday.
The truth is always present
because the future is now.
Justice hides.

Andrea Gaffney (11)



Stephanie Cook



Josephine Proctor

My name is orchid. And I have this man I would not call a friend. You see, sometimes, at night, when I brush my teeth I glance in the mirror and he is standing behind me; then I look again and he is gone. Sometimes when I am writing in my journal on my bed, he peeks up from underneath and quickly disappears. And sometimes when I try to sleep at night I'll look around and he is standing in my closet door but he does not disappear this time. He just stands there. His face is white and his eyes are black like a dead man's without a sparkle of reflected light. He is dressed in black and his lips are red or is it black? In his hand is a dagger that drips blood that vanishes before it reaches the ground. Sometimes when I fall asleep I will awaken to find him sitting next to me on my bed with his face a few inches from mine. He glares at me ready to stab. He vanishes but I know he will return. He hasn't completed his job in the killing garden. My name is Orchid. And I should be as white as snow but my petals are rusting with blood. My name is orchid.

-Heather Hodde (12)



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